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Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review

Introduction

Northampton Borough Council currently has 10 parish councils and would like to consider whether to create any more, particularly for the town of Northampton. This is, in the context of the proposals being considered by the Secretary of State to merge for Northampton Borough Council to be merged into a new unitary West Northamptonshire Council. To create a new Town or Parish Council, do this the Borough Council must undertake a community governance review.

The community governance review will cover the whole of the Council's area Borough (ie. all of the parished and unparished areas) and will be carried out pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, and other relevant statutory provisions. It will aim to gather as wide a view as possible on the Council's proposals and also invite any further proposals.

The review will have regard to the "Guidance on Community Governance Reviews" issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2010. The aim of the review is to ensure that the arrangements for community governance across the Borough reflect 'the identities and interests of the community in the area' and are 'effective and convenient'.

The review will be conducted in accordance with the Terms of Reference set out below.

What is a community governance review?

A community governance review is the process used to consider whether existing parish arrangements should be changed in any way. This may include the following:

- Altering the boundaries of existing parishes
- Changing the names of existing parishes
- Creating a new parish or abolishing an existing parish
- Creating or abolishing parish councils (which includes creating a town council, which is a type of parish council)
- Abolishing parish councils
- The electoral arrangements for parish councils (including the number of councillors and arrangements for parish warding)
- The grouping or de-grouping of parish councils (and consequential changes to their electoral arrangements)
- The "style" of a parish (enabling an area to be known as a town, community, neighbourhood or village rather than a parish).

The whole of the Borough of Northampton is included in the scope of this community governance review.

What is the Timeframe?

The proposed timeframe would be as follows:

Stage	Time allowed	Approximate Planned date
Council to consider Terms of Reference		Monday- 10th September 2018 ^{5th} <u>November 2018</u>
Terms of reference published		<u>November 2018</u>
1 st consultation period		<u>November 2018 – January 2018</u>
Consideration of submissions received – draft recommendations prepared and Council Meeting to consider initial draft recommendations		<u>January 2019 – February 2019</u>
<u>Special Council Meeting to consider initial draft recommendations</u>		<u>Mid-February 2019</u>
Draft recommendations are published for consultation		<u>February 2019</u>
<u>Second stage consultation</u>		<u>February to April 2019</u>
Considerations of submissions received – Order and final recommendations <u>to Council</u> are prepared <u>with draft Order</u>		<u>[] April 2019 – [] June 2019</u>
Council Meeting to consider final recommendations		<u>[] September 2019</u>
Final recommendations are published – Review concluded		<u>[] September 2019</u>
LGBCE consent for parish warding arrangements and related alterations		<u>[] September 2019</u>
Make Reorganisation Order		<u>[] September 2019</u>
Related Alterations Order decisions		<u>[] October 2019</u>
Publish Electoral Register		<u>[] December 2019</u>
Reorganisation Order in force		<u>[] April 2019</u>
Parish elections		<u>May 2020</u>

How will the review work?

We will consult on plans to create a new Town Council for Northampton and potentially for other areas of the Borough where communities are interested in forming new town or parish councils.

The consultation will ask questions on any proposals for changes to existing parish arrangements – if any.

The initial consultation that will help us to create our plans will take place ~~from between November [] 2018 and January [] 2018~~ and run for [] weeks (specific dates to be advised).

Following the close of the first period of consultation and consideration of the outcomes, the draft recommendations will be published ~~on in February [] 2019~~.

These draft recommendations will then be the subject of a second period of consultation, ~~which will run for [] weeks from the date of publication.~~

Following the end of the second period of consultation, all comments received will be considered against the draft recommendations. The final set of recommendations will then be submitted to full Council in ~~[] June 2019~~.

It is intended that the final recommendations, which will include any changes to the current parish arrangements in Northampton, will be implemented in time for the May 20~~19~~²⁰ elections, when the first elections to the proposed new Unitary Council will be made.

The Council will make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order in order to implement these recommendations. Such an Order may cover “consequential matters” required to give effect to the Order, such as the transfer of property or other assets, the setting of precepts for new parishes, and staffing matters.

The Council may recommend that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England make alterations to ward boundaries to reflect any changes made at a parish level. The Council notes that it will be for the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to decide if related alterations should be made as there will be a review of boundaries in connection with the creation of the new Unitary Council.

Who will we consult?

The Council is required to consult with local government electors living in Northampton Borough, as well as any other individuals and organisations (including local authorities such as parish councils) who “*appear to have an interest in the review*” ~~including the County Council prior to abolition (and/or shadow authority)~~

The Council must properly consider all representations that it receives during the periods of consultation, and will make representations available for viewing by the public.

How will we consult?

We will write to all parish councils and identified umbrella organisations (including the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils) before the start of the first period of consultation, inviting them to submit their views. The same process will be followed with the second period of consultation.

We will also publicise the review on our website, through our internal communication channels and on our social media platforms to engage with residents, community groups and other stakeholders.

We will also make use of our relationships with the local media to inform and involve as broad an audience as possible.

What will the review focus on?

The final recommendations made at the end of the review will seek to reflect the statutory requirements to have regard to the need to secure that community governance across the Borough:

- Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- Is effective and convenient.

When responding to the consultation on parish arrangements, you should ensure that your proposal takes account of these two criteria.

The Council will also need to take into account other arrangements for community representation or engagement in the area.

In considering the electoral arrangements of the parishes in its area, the Council is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day the review starts. In order to support those who wish to make a proposal, we will provide information on current parish arrangements (including maps), as well as current and projected future electorate figures for parishes. These are available to download by following the links below.

We will need to consider the number of town and parish councillors that will be appropriate for each body. There is no provision in legislation that each parish councillor should represent (as nearly as possible) the same number of electors. However, the government guidance reiterates the Commission’s belief that it is not in the interests of effective and convenient local government to have significant difference in levels of representation between different wards in the same parish. Additionally, any recommendations made by the review must adhere to the legal minimum number of parish councillors for any parish council, which is five. There is no legal maximum number of parish councillors.

Documents to be hyperlinked

- Borough Map
- Details of existing parishes including: map, size, electors, councillors, functions etc.
- ~~Proposals, results of consultation etc. will be added as they become available~~ Details of existing Council wards and population.

How to submit your views

You can respond to the consultation in the following ways:

Complete our consultation form attached and submit electronically to: [\[cgr\]@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:[cgr]@northampton.gov.uk)

Write to:
Community Governance Review (Chief Executive's Office)
Northampton Borough Council
The Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton
NN1 1DE

Send an email to: [\[cgr\]@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:[cgr]@northampton.gov.uk)

If you have any questions about the community governance review, please contact [] or call [].

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